

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Federal Emergency Management Agency
Administrator Deanne Bennett Criswell and Homeland Security Adviser Elizabeth
D. Sherwood-Randall**

June 22, 2021

The President. Well, our FEMA Director—Administrator is here today. We're going to talk about was the severe weather patterns we're facing which keeps—likely to increase every year. And I want to make sure that we're in a position to be able to help Americans all across the country and in all our jurisdictions as these severe weather incidents increase.

The last few days alone, we've seen droughts and wildfires in the West, and we've seen tornadoes in Illinois, flooding in the South and the Mid-Atlantic. And extreme weather doesn't confine itself, as you all know, to State lines. These crises require proactive Federal response. It's just not just the States responding.

And I know that your team, Administrator, is going to raise—be faced with a lot of challenges this year, more than most. And not that you're not used to it, but it's going to—this time, it's the whole country.

And we've already stepped up this year to help vaccinate the American people and respond to the—and—but now we have to respond to these brutal storms and more severe storms and fires that extend into longer seasons throughout the year. And we're going to bring every resource to bear to be prepared, to respond, and to help people recover, but it's a big job.

And we're making sure FEMA and other frontline agencies have what they need to continue getting the job done. And I insist on being ready for whatever comes our way. That's what this is all about. And that's what we're here today about. And I'll be hosting a meeting next week with Western Governors and FEMA and the Cabinet members to prepare for heat, drought, and wildfires in the West.

And so I want to thank everybody for being here today. And let me just say one other thing. You know, I was talking with my staff a moment ago in the office about wildfires. And you know, the thing I know a little bit about is the fire service. And there's an old expression: God made man, and then he made a few firefighters. They are—they have the higher incidence of severe injuries than police officers do. They are incredibly, incredibly brave, what they do: They run to the fire.

And I just realized—I didn't realize this, I have to admit—that Federal firefighters get paid \$13 an hour. That's going to end in my administration. That's a ridiculously low salary to pay Federal firefighters. Not that many Federal firefighters, but—and they—and I know you use all the resources, including State and local firefighters.

But, any rate, that's we're going to talk about today. And we're going to be brought up to date on what we can expect this season. And many of you have covered what's already happened. And the drought in the West is just astounding, when you take a look at it. Fires have already started and flooding.

So we're in for a tough season, but I think we've got to be prepared and have every resource available to make sure we're there for the American people.

Thank you all so very much.

Q. Mr. President, on voting rights, is this end? Is it over?

The President. Thank you.

Q. On voting rights, sir. Do you think it's over?

Q. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Deanne Bennett Criswell and Homeland Security Adviser Elizabeth D. Sherwood-Randall, meeting.

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